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the constitutional attributes of the General Government, those at least who have made the study of the law their calling, should be zealous to consult the legislative wisdom of all countries and ages, in order to define and secure the *rights of individuals*, remembering that the safety of these is the great final object of every civil constitution, of all legislation and public administration.

ART. VI.—*The Progress of Society.*

Idées sur la Philosophie de l'Histoire de l'Humanité par Herder : ouvrage traduit de l'Allemand et précédé d'une Introduction. Par EDGAR QUINET. 3 vols. 8vo. Paris. 1827.

The present is a revolutionary age. The political elements seem every where in motion:—and all are busy, either as actors in, or spectators of, the great work, as it is called, of Reform. And while new revolutions are in progress, old ones are becoming the themes of conversation, and the subjects of research. Men are going back to the ancient battle-fields of their fellow men,—studying the principles, which gave birth to their uprisings,—noting the connexions of remarkable events,—and writing the lives of the leaders of revolutions. All this is natural, and it is well. We rejoice in the interest, which men are taking in the history of past revolutions. The inquiry will furnish encouragement for the future. We have a view, in regard to past revolutions, which makes us believe, that the more recent ones are for good. And we have selected the work whose title stands at the head of this article, for the purpose of speaking of the view, with which we would have the history of past revolutions written and read.

The object of history is not merely the recording of facts. The world,—as its distant and widely extended climes, with their peculiarities of situation and climate, make together one great whole,—so the events that have happened in it, which are happening, and which will happen, are closely linked together, and interwoven, as it were, into one unbroken thread. The past has had its influence in forming the present. The present is operating mightily upon the future. The

sun, that rides proudly and gloriously, in his splendor and magnificence, over the centre of our globe,—calling forth verdure and foliage, in all their beauty and luxuriance, and receiving, in return, the homage of jocund nature, in the thousand forms of her teeming existence,—is the same orb, which, in the frozen regions of the poles, just peeps faintly and coldly forth from the extreme horizon, and then hastens away, shuddering at the dreariness which broods over the scene. And so man, as he now stands forth in his beauty and strength, in his present intellectual vigor and moral elevation,—the searcher of earth, the explorer of oceans, the student of the skies,—is the self-same being, the same in form, in mind, in destination, as the poor, creeping, untutored savage, who, ages ago, in his weakness and ignorance, looked upon the little earth around him as the whole of creation,—upon the ocean, as a something, he knew not what, and reaching, he knew not where; and who stood, gazing with mingled fear and admiration, as the fires of heaven alternately rose and set, glimmered and faded away. Man is, and ever has been the same being, in his strength and his weakness, in his knowledge and his ignorance, in his elevation and his depression, still the same; ever dependent upon his fellow man, ever operating upon the destiny of the future, ever doing something, either of good or of evil, for those who come after him.

The object of history, then, is not merely the recording of facts. Its most interesting purpose, in the view which we have taken of it, is to represent man in his gradual march from barbarism to civilization, from civilization to refinement. Its great utility is, to trace the principles, which are governing, and which always have governed him;—to keep in view the end to which he has always been tending, and to point to us the steps by which he has approached it. To do its duty faithfully,—to array itself in its most attractive garb, and to act within its most enlarged sphere,—history should beat down the artificial boundaries, which separate nation from nation,—the American from the European,—the European from the Asiatic. It should treat man,—whatever his situation, whatever his character, in whatever age he may have lived,—as one great family, though of many members,—originating in the same source,—operated upon by the same principles,—pressing forward towards the same end.

History may, nay, it must note down events, when and where they occur. It must, we know, inform us of Cæsar, of Leonidas, of Buonaparte, Cromwell, and Washington,—when they lived,—what great actions they achieved,—what land they blessed or cursed,—how they rose and how they fell. It must do more. It must go farther than these great men and great things, these landmarks of history. It must take notice of the smaller characters, who have played a part in the great drama. It must chronicle the lesser events, which have served to connect together the greater. All this it must do, we know. But this, as we have said, is not its chief object. It is the mere drudge work,—the gathering together of the materials for the building. When all this is accomplished, the labor is but begun. Beauty, and order, and utility are not yet seen. These will be displayed,—not until the foundation is laid, the pillars erected, the work complete :—not until it rises upon our view as one compact, united, ‘stupendous whole.’

The great beauty, the grand purpose of history, then, is not displayed, until it shows us man, not as an individual, but as a race ;—not as acting for himself alone, but as operating powerfully on all around and before him. It will not have reached its high aim, till it looks upon great events, not merely as happening here or there,—originated or conducted by this or that distinguished leader,—but as parts of that grand series, which began with time, and which will end only with time ;—as exerting each an influence on all that succeed, if unseen, not unfelt,—as reaching backward, in their causes, to the first,—and forward, in their effects, to the last link of that grand chain, which encircles the universe in its embrace.

And how beautiful, how grand, how ennobling is this view of mankind and their doings ! Ages have rolled on,—generation has succeeded generation :—but the tie, that connects man with his fellow man, has never been severed. They, who have gone before, by their gradual advancement, have contributed to place us where we are ; and we, in our turn, are but carrying on the same great enterprise of improvement, in which they have labored. There is not a great event in the annals of the world, wherever or by whom achieved, that has yet ceased to operate, or that ever will. There is not a distinguished character,—be it for his virtues, or his crimes,—

who has ever trod upon the earth, who does not yet live in the good or ill influences of his life. Is it not a pleasing thought, that men of all ages, and all nations, are thus fellow-laborers,—are thus brethren? Is it not a high and interesting duty, which, in this view, history has in charge?

And in the same view, in which we have said that the history of man should be written, should it be read also, and studied. Indeed, the latter will be a consequence of the former. But are we not apt to disregard this great and extended view of our race, as we study the actions, which particular individuals, or particular nations, have accomplished? Do we not think and speak of the ancients,—the moderns,—the old world, and the new, too much as subjects distinct and wide apart,—the one beginning where the other ceased,—without relation to, and independent of each other? When we study our own Revolution, for instance, do we connect it with all preceding ones, as but a part of one whole? Do we not rather view it, as standing by itself,—wrought out, by our hands alone, without aid from past generations? And, on the other hand, when we pause upon the spots, where, ages ago and in other lands, the oppressed has wrestled with the oppressor,—when we witness the displays of patriotism and valor which those spots afford,—do we not look upon the events there achieved, as belonging only to the time and place which saw them,—to Greece, to Rome, or to England,—without reflecting, as we ought, that they are all but parts of the great history of man; that the spots, which bore witness of them, are immortalized, not so much by the events themselves, as by the immense influence which those events have exerted on all succeeding generations? Greece and Rome and England did, indeed, witness them; and if there be any glory in that circumstance, be it theirs respectively,—be it theirs entirely. But the influence of these events stopped not at the boundaries of either. It expired not with the age which saw them. The world has witnessed it. The human race has felt it. To the world, then,—to the human race,—to us even, belongs their influence,—and in that their greatest interest.

The thoughts, which we have thus expressed, on the views with which history should be written and read, are most naturally suggested by those great revolutions, which have from time to time agitated the world. We say, that the thought

of the intimate connexion between all ages and generations of men,—the thought, that the present is the combination of the results of the past,—that the future will be the combination of the results of both,—and that all have in view the same grand result,—is most naturally suggested by the history of revolutions. For what are the events in the history of man? They are but a series of experiments upon human nature. And it is with these experiments, as with those in philosophy or mechanics. In these last, we see the operation of causes in producing the great ultimate effect; and comprehend that effect itself the better, the broader the scale on which the experiments are tried. And the same principle is true, in that noblest of philosophies,—the philosophy of man. Great revolutions are great experiments;—experiments on a broad scale. They are originated and led on by gigantic minds. They operate by the combined effect of combined causes, which in their separate operation would be unseen, but which become manifest in the great result. Whenever and wherever they may have commenced, they are clearly seen not to have terminated with those who immediately passed through them,—but, like the ocean-swell, when the fury of the tempest has subsided, to have spread round and reached forward to the farthest vestige of man. Great revolutions, in short, are the prominent and enduring landmarks on the highway of the world,—far raised above all that surrounds them, that they may point out to us the progress, not of this or that particular nation, but of the human race. It is in these revolutions, therefore, that for these reasons we most clearly trace the everlasting tie which links nation with nation, and man with man, from the first to the last of his species. It is from these, and for these reasons, that we learn, that the only correct view which history can take of mankind is the enlarged and comprehensive one we have suggested, that of one vast phalanx, without distinction of territory or time, moving onward to one great end; each generation and each event doing something to help forward the same cause;—the world, as it has been, and as it is, being but one extended theatre;—man, in his thousand varieties, but one grand, connected whole.

If the view which we have thus taken of our race and of their actions be a true one;—and if it be true also that the great revolutions, which have marked their progress, serve clearly to show this unity of interest, ‘end and aim,’—a connected history

of these revolutions must become interesting and important. True, the revolutions, which have happened, are interesting in themselves. They are interesting, considered merely in reference to the times and places in which they originated. They are so, as all that is mighty and strange is interesting. But how will their interest be heightened, and become intense,—how will their importance be magnified,—how will they seize hold upon and rivet our attention,—if we discover that they are not distinct and separate things,—local, temporary, or transient ;—that they are a series of connected events,—originating, whatever difference there may be in minuter points,—originating, all of them, in one and the same great principle, the struggle of man, to throw off the mass that had weighed down his spirit to the earth :—and always resulting in some advance, small though it often be, yet some advance towards the goal that he aims at.

We stand at the present day in the glorious light of freedom. The precious privileges of unshackled thought and action are ours, and as we go onward with a bounding step, and a laughing eye, we point to *our* Revolution, as the battle that was fought for them ;—to its result, as the victory that was achieved in their behalf. But will not the high and generous feelings, which it so justly inspires, be elevated and strengthened ;—will not our Revolution acquire an interest and a lustre unspeakably greater, if we shall discover that this too stands not alone,—an isolated thing ;—that it began not with us, and will stop not with us ;—that all past events have been preparing the way for it,—that all past generations have been laboring in its cause ?

And we believe that all this is true. The history of man is that of one continued struggle for freedom. Man has indeed been debased, cast down, and trodden under foot. He has crawled in the very dust. Tyranny, and with it ignorance and superstition and vice, have bound him in their fetters, and buried him, as it were, in the dark caverns of the earth. But they have never quenched his spirit. Man has never despaired. Hope, that angel of light,—hope, ‘ which comes to all,’ nations as well as individuals,—immortal hope has never deserted him. In his deepest degradation,—in his darkest prison-house, she has stood by his side, and pointed his view onward and upward. The eternal principle, created and destined

for high attainments, was ever stirring within him, and urging him forward to something beyond, something better. True, man knew not what it was,—this dim, undefined, evanescent something. But he felt that it was worthy of his effort ;—that though mysterious, it was animating, though distant, glorious. And his eye was ever upon it ; his footsteps were ever toward it. His ever active spirit was longing, aching to lay hold of it, though it seemed like a vision. Man clung to it as to life, though he comprehended it not.

But, thanks be to God, it is no longer a mystery. The light that has broken in upon man, has revealed to us what it was. It was none other than that whose reality is now ours ;—ours because the human race has been struggling for it. It was freedom, independence,—independence of mind, of heart, of soul. It was moral and intellectual improvement ;—freedom to range, with thought, over her boundless empire,—to compass the earth,—to ascend to heaven.

This is the great cause which, though but lately developed, has united the efforts of the world. This is the great cause, which has linked together as one family all nations of all ages. It is in reference to this, that history, to be perfect, should be entire ;—that its views, to be correct, should be connected ; and it is in reference to this, that we would at this time glance, in this connected view, at some of those revolutions which have distinguished the great history of man.

We place ourselves at the Christian era. This was, in every respect, a most interesting period. It was the one, to which all prior history had been pointing. It was ‘ the fulness of time,’ for which all preceding time had been making ready. It stands conspicuous,—not because a new order of things, different in causes and tendency entirely from the old, was then established,—but because a new and mighty instrument was then first put forth, in aid of the same purpose, which before had made but slow and feeble progress. For these reasons, therefore,—that it embodies in itself the result of all that had gone before,—and because the series of events, from that time to this, is sufficiently long to illustrate their connexion, it is the most appropriate and interesting point that we can start from.

We stand, then, at that momentous period, which the introduction of Christianity has immortalized. And what is the

first thought, that bursts upon our mind? It is, that we are standing, at the very moment, in the midst of a most glorious revolution :—a revolution, glorious in itself, but incomparably more so in its tremendous and never-ending effects upon the human race. Yes, the star that rose in the east,—mild, peaceable, and radiant, as the young child to which it pointed ;—the guide of the wise men,—the light, as it has proved, of the world,—the ‘star in the east,’ was the herald of an event, mightier in itself, and mightier in its consequences, than any which the dazzling sun, in all his brilliancy, ever looked upon. The pæan of angels, as it sounded in the ears of the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, proclaimed the advent of a Being, before whom and whose kingdom tyrants have trembled, and conquerors fled away. The introduction of Christianity was, indeed, a revolution. And what a revolution ! Where can we learn, that such events belong to the world,—that they interest man, whenever and wherever he is found,—if not from this, the first, the greatest of the series ? Where can we be taught, that the great end of great events has been the improvement, the progress, the elevation of man, if not in this,—this ‘heaven’s best gift to man ?’ We need not say, in this day and generation, that Christianity stopped not with those, to whom it was proclaimed,—that the influence of this greatest, because religious revolution, was neither limited nor partial.

For what was Christianity,—and what was the purpose of the revolution, which ushered it in ? It came, indeed, to proclaim, that there was a God,—a kind and beneficent Father. It pointed to a heaven. It spoke of an hereafter. But it did more than this. It came nearer to man, as an inhabitant of earth. It whispered to him, that he was an immortal being ;—that he had within him a noble spirit, capable of exalted attainments, and destined to lofty purposes, even here,—a spark of divinity itself. It bade him cultivate, improve, exalt it. It bade him rise up in his native strength, to shake off the tyranny of ignorance, of vice, and of his fellow man,—to burst asunder the shackles, which bound down his high nature. It bade him be free,—in mind, that he might be intelligent,—in conscience, that he might be holy,—free in every thing, as his Creator had designed him. This was the grand purpose of the Christian Revolution,—to fit man for heaven, by making him all that he

could be on earth,—and to give him an impulse, in this upward direction, which he should feel to the end of time. And has its purpose been changed? Has its influence ceased? No. Christianity has not changed. In itself, it is, and ever has been the same. It breathes the same spirit,—it reads the same lessons,—offers the same examples, sanctions, hopes and fears, as when it fell from the lips of its divine proclaimer. The influence of Christianity has never ceased. It shines on, and has ever shone on, the same glorious, unvarying, never-dying flame,—hidden indeed, often hidden by the devices of the foe,—but never quenched. And now that the cloud has been, in part, rolled away, we can trace its bright and shining track along the nations and through the earth,—as a pillar of fire in the mental night.

But the struggle of this great revolution is over. The divine herald, at whose word it arose, has finished his course,—has risen from the dead,—has ascended to heaven. Christianity has obtained a foothold on the earth. Its apostles have gone forth, to proclaim its glad tidings. And now look round upon the civilized world, during a few centuries that succeeded. Its history may be written in a few lines. It was becoming rapidly the slave of proud, imperial, giant Rome,—Rome, whose romantic origin we smile at, as we read,—whose rapid and extended power strikes us with astonishment,—but whose fate furnishes the next great chapter in the history of man. Behold her, in the day of her greatness, rising up in her beauty and strength, the pride of the world, or rather in herself the whole world. Watch her as she emerges from the dark regions of fiction, gathering strength and elegance as she advances, till she stands forth in her bold and august reality. Behold the splendid city upon its seven hills,—with its rich dwellings, its extended forum, its noble temples,—the loved habitation of the Muses,—the home of architecture, of sculpture, of painting. Behold her towering amid all this her glory and magnificence. Above all, behold her vast empire. Go out with her, as she traverses the earth, with the sword in one hand and the sceptre in the other, beating down and overturning every obstacle in her way, overthrowing and subjugating every people that opposed her,—and inscribing her name, in golden capitals, upon the front gate of every city. Go with her, in short, through the East and the West, the North and the South, till her great purpose seems accomplished,

—till you stand with her on that mountain elevation, where the Roman Empire seems to encompass the earth,—where civilized mankind appear the subjects of her Emperor. How exalted her situation,—how rapid her progress,—how stupendous her power. But look again. Can it be, that the scene before us is real? Have we not been, and are we not still deluded by some magic vision? The noble city is in ruins. The Empire has vanished,—its glory has departed. What a sudden transition,—what an awful change! Rome, with all her beauty, magnificence and power, has fallen. The splendid scene, which we just gazed on with such delight, has faded,—and a dark, blank void seems to frown sullenly upon our view. Is it not, we ask again, in an agony of wonder, is it not all a vision? Is it not all the work of some ‘mighty magic?’ But, no,—it is not a vision. It is sober reality. Another great revolution has come over the affairs of man,—and the only magic, that wrought it out, is the same that wrought out others,—the tendency of the human race to mental and moral improvement. We have in it the next great event, in the series we have spoken of, connected with the past, and operating upon the future. And it is as such, that we would, for a few moments, dwell upon its leading features.

It would carry us too far from our main purpose, to trace the many circumstances that made Rome the prey of those who finally subdued her. We know that the ancient republican spirit, with its love of liberty, its heroism and its manly enterprise, had long ere this departed;—that the aristocracy, with its wealth and influence, had had its reign; and that now the dark days of the Emperors had come. Rome, ever dissatisfied with her present power,—and with an eye ever bent on some new conquest, had been constantly struggling to make her name synonymous with the World. But as her territory extended, her strength diminished. The spirit that should have accompanied her in her conquests had gone, and every step she took was but to her ruin. The portentous cloud, that was rising in the North, she saw not, or if she did, she disregarded it. The march of her power seemed to her yet strong and vigorous. But, at length, the evil hour came. The cloud that had been gradually rising and thickening, now burst upon her,—and all her boasted power and glory became as though they had not been. The revolution was total. Like the mountain

torrent, the barbarians of the North came down upon her, and she fell. True, it was barbarism opposed to civilization. But it was also the vigor of nature, contending with the weakness of refinement. It was untutored valor struggling with polished cowardice, and it conquered,—completely conquered. On the ruins of the splendid temple now stood the hut of the savage, and in the place of the polished, and once noble Roman, now stalked the Ostrogoth, the Visigoth and the Saxon. These are the men who, as it were, overturned the world, and such are the circumstances under which they did it.

And standing now upon the ruins of Rome, thus overrun by barbarians, is its whole story told, when we say, that it rose and that it fell? Was the purpose of this great revolution fulfilled completely, when the beauty of the City, and the power of the Empire, had vanished under its influence? Was Rome built up, merely that it might be pulled down?

We have said, there was a link, which connected great events. We trace it in this. The Christian Revolution, as we have seen, though its struggle was over, had left behind its influence, and its energy. It did not, indeed, plant the seeds of freedom and improvement, for this had been done by God's own hand, when he created man. But it breathed into them a spirit of vitality. It bade them expand, grow up, and bear fruit. But the work of cultivation and nurture it left for man; and how unfit, how totally unfit for this great purpose were they who then occupied the civilized earth, the character of their overthrow illustrates. There never has been a character more manly and high-minded, than was that of the Roman in the day of his glory;—and there never has been one more mean and degraded,—more unfit to carry on the great cause of improvement, than that of the same being in his last moments. We may lament the fact,—we do lament it,—but yet it is true, that this once noble race had become so degenerate, that the safety of mankind was inconsistent with their existence; and because it was so, they were swept away, as we have seen. In their place came up those who, though ignorant and barbarous, were composed of native materials, out of which great things were to be wrought.

The degeneracy of the Roman citizens had been naturally followed by the degeneracy of their institutions. Government had become a rotten tyranny, destructive alike to the oppressor and the oppressed. The throne of the Emperor, ex-

alted as it was, was not more so in its power, than in its detestable and despotic principles. The state of things, as then existing, was the result of that refinement, so called, which had been refining the world, till it had refined it to nothing. There was no soundness,—no foundation left, to build upon. These institutions, therefore, were swept away with the people among whom, and by whose agency, they had been established. Upon their ruins arose the Feudal System, whose simplicity and energy were characteristic of those who brought it forward,—and in whose strong embrace these strange conquerors were to be upheld and bound together.

As we stand, then, upon the spot where Rome once stood, a melancholy ruin is not all that meets our view. The thought of desolation is not the only one, that rises upon our minds. Rome, and all that was Roman, have, indeed, passed away. But it was to make room for better men, and better things,—better, especially, in that view which we would take of all great events,—better for the interest of the human race. And in this view, has not this event an intimate connexion with the human race? Does it not reach even to us of the present day? The blood of those very men, whom we have just met amid the ruins of Rome, now runs in our veins. Their history is the history of all Europe. Its inhabitants have been their descendants. We ourselves are their descendants,—bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh. As long, therefore, as there is a tie, which binds an ancestor to his posterity,—as long as there is a relation between father and son,—so long is there a connexion between this event and us.

But it stops not here. It rests not with the individuals. The Feudal System, we have seen, was originated by these men. And who shall appreciate the influence which this system has had upon all succeeding times, and is even at this moment exerting? It would be interesting to trace the minute features of this institution, in its origin and progress, and to watch its operations upon subsequent systems. We can, however, but glance at it. Its origin was singular. It was not an institution, which sprung up in the gradual development of mental improvement, and political knowledge. It was not an institution, which statesmen and philosophers could claim as the result of their efforts to enlighten mankind. Like the forest oak, it started up, as it were, the offspring of nature. It originated without cultivation. It grew without support.

And though it extended its branches over man, yet it was over man ignorant, barbarous, but free. Its principles were energetic, and binding. They were precisely adapted to the age and the circumstances which called them forth. They were fit guardians for the infancy of men, who, instead of growing up in power, in the self-same spot where they had been planted in weakness, came down from their native mountains, and broke in upon a people, who were centuries before them in what gives a nation its character. Nor was the influence of the Feudal System confined to the infancy of those who established it. It was with them in their slow progress to manhood, uniting and sustaining them. By its energy alone, they were preserved through the dark ages. The dawn that succeeded did, indeed, reveal better guides, and more rational institutions. But the principles of this system have never been done away. And even at the present day, the study of these principles is essential to the understanding of our own systems of law.

We go back again to the ruins of Rome, and how different, now, is the view before us, from that which first met our eyes! How is the mystery cleared up;—how does light shine out of darkness! We repeat it, a melancholy ruin is not all that meets our view. We behold a manly and independent race of men,—the materials of subsequent generations, our own direct ancestors. We behold a system of government springing up, adapted to the age, holding together in its embrace those interests of humanity, which, under the institutions that it superseded, would have been unfriended and deserted; and surviving by the energy of its principles, in some measure, until now. The gloom that came over us has passed away. The idea of destruction is lost in the greater and more interesting one of improvement. It is in these men and this institution, that we perceive the result of the overthrow of Rome. Nay more. It is by the subsequent and unceasing operation of this result, by the influence which it has exerted upon succeeding times, that we connect the great event which produced it with ourselves. As the votaries of science,—the friends of literature,—the lovers of the arts, we may weep over the fall of this once mighty and beautiful and magnificent empire. We may lament that she could not have been spared, to be the ornament and pride of creation, as she once was. But there is a higher view and a nobler sympa-

thy, which should rise up, to fill the eye and the heart. It is that which takes in and embraces the great interest of man. Rome has fallen, and we sigh. But look again. Rome has fallen, it is true,—but the world is comparatively free. She has fallen, and her fall was one great step in the march of freedom.

But again the tide of time rolls on. The new inhabitants of the earth, as they may more than figuratively be called, had peopled the places, which they first overspread with ruins,—and under the influence of the system we have spoken of, they had carried forward the great chain of history a few centuries further. They had become a great and wide spreading people. By the vigor of their own character, and of that of their government, they had emerged in safety from the dark ages, without any great convulsions ;—and by the guidance of the dawning light, cheerful, inspiring, nay glorious, as contrasted with the gloom which it dispelled, they were advancing with more direct and rapid strides in their march of improvement. England had indeed been the scene of a few changes ; small, it is true, compared with those we have before contemplated,—but yet changes, which in some measure affected subsequent events. England,—and as we mention her name in this connexion, and at this point of time, we cannot but pause and gaze upon her for a moment. If there be a tie which connects together and spreads round the influences of great events, how conspicuous, how important is the name of England. If there be any truth in the comprehensive view we have taken of man, how does the name of England glisten in this history of the human race ! From the eleventh century to the seventeenth, her history is the key-stone of all history. Her name is associated with every great event which interested the great cause of man. The march of religion, of liberty and of improvement was, during this period, over the soil of England ;—and it was from her borders, that there went out the influence which was eventually to elevate and ennoble the world. Yes, if we would study the history of man further,—if we would watch his footsteps on the way to what he is,—England and her history are the principal subjects for our observation. Her soil was the great battle-field,—the only home of freedom,—till some of her own high-minded children found another and a better, in this Western world. Honor, therefore, and praise be to England and her children for what they have ac-

complished for man and for the world. Proud, indeed, on that view of it, are the recollections of this land ; and happy are we, that it was the home of our fathers.

But we return to the order of time. England, in whom, as we said, from the tenth century, the interest of history, in the view we have taken of it, is concentrated,—had been, even before this time, the scene of a few changes, which in some measure operated upon subsequent events. The Briton had been subjugated by the Roman. The Roman had voluntarily withdrawn himself, but it was only to make way for the Saxon,—who, first solicited as an ally, had rushed in, and become master. But even he was not destined to remain the sole possessor of the land. Another change was to be made, which should give and which did give an impulse to the people whom it concerned. We refer to the Norman conquest. This, indeed, can scarcely be denominated a revolution, in the sense, in which we have used that word. It originated not in any national convulsion. It evolved no striking result, like that of the overthrow of Rome. It was rather a contest for a disputed throne,—a struggle, whether William or Harold should reign King of England. True, in its event it was a change, and one that deserves to be mentioned in the series of events, as beneficial to the progress of man. It is from this event, that the history of England, and in that history in general, takes a more definite and clearly connected form. Its result was important. It was so in the mingling together of the Saxons and the Normans, which it brought about, and in the formation thereby of a race of men, which has had no superior upon the face of the earth. It was important, too, as it placed a man, like William the Conqueror, upon the throne of a kingdom, by which so much and such great things were to be accomplished.

In the progress of man, as we have thus far traced it, and as it displayed itself for a few centuries beyond this, unmarked by any great event, the way was preparing gradually and almost imperceptibly, for another revolution, second only to that, by which Christianity was introduced. We have gone back to the period, when this instrument was set at work. We have spoken of its great purpose ; and we left it struggling to gain admittance into the world. Fifteen centuries had now passed away, since that great event, and what a change,—what an advance in the human race, is perceived even from this point ! But where, during all this, was Christ-

ianity,—where was that influence, which seemed to us omnipotent? Man has, indeed, been improved, his condition ameliorated,—but how very little, compared with what we thought Christianity would do for him. Where, we ask again, during these fifteen centuries, was Christianity? What has palsied its arm, resisted its progress, impaired its energy? Can it be, that the experiment has failed,—that this mighty agent has proved faithless to its trust? We thought, that when it came, darkness and ignorance were to flee away from its presence,—that, at its sovereign mandate, man's chains were to drop off,—that he would rise up exulting in the joyous feelings of liberty, and reach, at once, the high point of his destination. We imagined, that the light of Christianity was, at once, to be spread abroad,—that its course was to be one blazing, undimmed track,—that it was speedily to be glorified, and, with itself, was to glorify the human race. But how different the fact. During fifteen centuries Christianity had indeed been in the world,—but where had been her habitation,—what her condition? Go back with her, through those darkest of all dark ages, the ages of religious fanaticism and persecution. Watch her, as she lay trembling at the feet of that worst of all tyrannies,—the tyranny of priestcraft and superstition. Behold yon stately edifice, piled up in a profusion of magnificence, that distinguishes it from all about it. Behold its vast extent,—its solemn grandeur,—its wide domains. Surely it is the abode of power, of splendor, of some great one,—perhaps the greatest one of earth. The palaces of kings cannot compare with it. Emperors dwell not in such noble places. It is, indeed, the abode of the greatest one of earth. It is the prison-house of Christianity. Here, in thick darkness, has this light of the world,—this pioneer of freedom, been cooped up, and confined for centuries. Her bitter foes have torn off her garment of light, and arrayed her in sackcloth. The cheerful and animating sound of her voice they have stifled. The arm, which she reached out to man, they have bound down. Her sacred books they have sealed up;—and, secure in the oblivion to which they think she is consigned, they have gone forth to pollute and tyrannize over what she came to purify and make free.

This was the habitation, and such was the condition of Christianity, for fifteen centuries. The other tyrannies,

under which men have groaned and been crushed, are poor,—they are nothing, in comparison with that over which the banner of religion floated, as its ensign and authority. But was there to be no end to all this? Was man forever to be cheated of the benefits of Christianity? Was her imprisonment to be interminable,—were her dungeon-doors never to be dashed asunder? Thanks again be to God, that it was not so. The sixteenth century was soon to dawn,—a century ever memorable for the great event, which has immortalized it. Another deliverer of man was to be raised up. Another revolution, in aid of his great cause, was at hand. That deliverer was Luther. That revolution was the Reformation. The progress of time has brought us to another great event in the history of man,—the Reformation,—an event, in its universal interest, and wide spread influence, second only to that by which Christianity was promulgated. We would speak of it, for a moment, in the view in which we have spoken of those which preceded it.

If the great purpose which we have assigned to Christianity, the improvement and freedom of man, even on earth, was its true and real purpose,—and who, in our day, will doubt it?—how does this great revolution, which achieved its reform, harmonize with the great view which we have taken of the human race :—how does its history furnish another,—a bright and striking proof,—that great events belong to mankind, and that they all, in their order, have been leading on to the same grand result! The minute causes of this revolution, it is neither within our limits, nor necessary to our purpose to describe. The review which we have taken of the previous history of man, and of the leading events which have marked its character, opens to our view the great operating cause of this event. That review has displayed to us the slow yet constant advance of man,—while Christianity, which, in its free course, would have hastened him forward, and which, enfeebled as it had been, had yet done something in his favor, had been fettered and locked up. It is easy to perceive the natural result of these circumstances. As man became more and more enlightened, as he felt the moving of his spirit within him stronger towards improvement, and as he grasped the more earnestly at every thing which would help him forward in this course, the enemies of the cause would strive

to rivet closer the fetters in which they had bound him, and to shut out more completely the light that would show him what he was. And this was what they did. The history of Christianity has shown it,—for Christianity, perverted as we have seen it, was the great weapon which they wielded. But though the struggle between them might be long, it was yet certain that it must have an end :—that victory must declare itself in favor of one or the other :—that those who had laid hold of and converted to their degrading purpose the great engine of freedom, would either prevail in the contest, and thereby put an end to the hope of man :—or else that man, spurred on by the impulse of the last great struggle, would rise above his oppressors,—wrest from their grasp the weapon of his safety,—and, secure in its strength, march forward unmolested. The latter was the result. Man was the conqueror. The Reformation was the victory. We know, indeed, that other and minuter causes were in operation to bring about this result,—but we delight in the discovery, that they were all subservient to the great moving cause,—the irresistible tendency of the human race to more perfect liberty.

It is, however, in the influence which the Reformation has exerted, that we trace most clearly that it belongs to man and to the world. Where has that influence stopped? What time or place or boundaries have limited it? To what place or age does it belong exclusively? Joyfully we reply,—joyfully does all subsequent history respond, that it has found no limit, and that it never will. The Reformation of Christianity was the restoration of man to mental and moral power,—to himself. It taught him that he was capable of free thought and unrestrained action, that he had the ability to secure them, and that in these were his happiness,—his true power,—his only safety. The struggle which it caused him, gave a nerve to his arm,—the result with which it blessed him gave a courage to his heart, which has hastened him forward to that which he now is. We can trace its great principles, animating and governing all succeeding events, and giving a character of improvement to all subsequent history. But we need not enlarge upon this topic. The principles of our own Revolution, and the cause which gave it being, are too nearly allied to those of the Reformation, to need an argument to con-

nect them together. The progress of man from this event is too direct and plain, to leave us in the dark as to the spirit that animated him,—where it originated,—or how it operated. Such, therefore, being the origin and results of the Reformation, it takes its place,—a high and conspicuous place indeed,—in the same great series of events we have been considering. Great as it is in itself,—it yet gathers interest and importance as belonging to the history of the world, as being, in its principles, one of the causes of our own free institutions. And he, too, the immortal Luther, he whose daring spirit and invincible firmness first lit up and bore aloft the torch of this revolution,—whose name will be remembered, while Christianity shall endure,—how is he doubly ennobled, when, in the universal influence of the Reformation, we can hail him as the benefactor of the human race ! That title is his desert. For whatever of good has been since done for freedom,—for all the privileges and blessings, which have since been vouchsafed to mankind,—indeed, for the very elevation, on which we are now standing,—honor and gratitude belong to the great Reformer. His place is among the great and good of earth, whenever and wherever they may have lived,—high in the pages of Christianity,—in the annals of the world.

The immense influence which the Reformation thus exerted upon the human mind, was in nothing more conspicuous than in the spirit of inquiry, which it called forth and stimulated. Awakened, as it were, from a deep lethargy, men began to look round upon their condition generally,—to ascertain its wants, and to devise the means of most readily supplying them. They discovered, that in the sacred and precious matter of their religion, they had been trifled with and deceived by their oppressors. They discovered, too, by the result of their struggle, the animating fact,—the fact which gave a value and a power to every thing else,—that they were superior to their oppressors ; that the force which had kept them down had been but chicanery ; that truth was mighty, and as it had prevailed in religion, would also prevail in all else. And they availed themselves of this discovery. We can hardly estimate too highly this effect of the Reformation, the zeal for general investigation which it inspired among men,—the resolute determination with which it filled them, that as they had discovered and remedied one great abuse, they

would search out, that they might remedy, every other that oppressed them. We say that this effect can hardly be estimated too highly, for we believe that it was this which gave the Reformation its greatest and most salutary influence upon subsequent events. This spirit of inquiry, thus resulting, became in its turn a powerful instrument. It went forth in every direction, and set itself about its great work of reform. It left nothing unexamined. In prosecuting its design, the first objects which attracted its attention, and those to which it applied the severest scrutiny, were the principles and institutions of government. And it was this spirit of inquiry, thus set in motion by the Reformation, and thus directed to the examination and improvement of government, which brought about the next great revolution, which will fall under our notice.

The throne of England had now been filled for six centuries by a series of individuals, whose characters, as far as they are material to our purpose, may be written in a few lines. They had all of them striven after, and exercised absolute power. They had all been tyrants,—different in degree, indeed, but only as they differed in personal energy and ability. The great principle which governed them all was, that the right of Kings was not only divine in its origin, but unlimited in its extent. Believing themselves born to govern, it followed that all the rest of men were born but to obey. The voice of the king, in its uncontrolled majesty, was to be the voice of God, and, of course, that of the people was to be stifled as unhallowed. Let it be understood, however, that we say not this of these kings, entirely as a reproach. There is much in the circumstances, the times, the small advance of mankind, their own education, to extenuate their conduct. But this was the uniform character of government, down to the Reformation,—the power of the monarch supreme, that of the people comparatively nothing. And this character was carried out to its extreme perfection, by that model of all tyrants, Henry VIII., when the light of the Reformation first displayed itself to man, and when the boldness, with which that event inspired him, first led him to examine its features. From this moment, a new scene of things appears. Instead of the dead calm of submission, there is a movement of the waters. Animated by the influence, which now began to operate upon the mind, men displayed at first a sort of restlessness. In their period-

ical assemblies, which, before, had been but matters of form, called to give a kind of sanction to the proceedings of the king, and to vote him the money which he would have wrested from them had they refused it, and dismissed when his sovereign power had exacted from them what he wanted, and his sovereign pleasure determined that they had sat long enough ;—in these periodical assemblies, thus a burlesque upon free debate, an ‘ unreal mockery ’ of liberty,—the spirit of inquiry made its first feeble attempts. The eternal cry of prerogative, to which men had so long listened, as to something harmless and sacred, began to have a startling sound in their ears. They wondered what it meant. The old charters were dug up, and examined, and studied, in reference to this point. New and strange ideas began to be broached. Men inquired, in their minds, whether they who were most interested in the operation of any measure, had not a right to be heard in regard to it,—whether they, who had earned and possessed, and were to pay their money, ought not to be consulted in relation to its disposition. It began to be a serious question, for whose benefit government was established ; whether for the single individual on whose head accidental birth had placed a crown of power, or for the thousands and millions, whom the same accident had removed from the throne. In a word, the thought of his own importance, and of his own power, was dawning upon the mind of man, solemn and animating. True, it was at first but a thought,—a thought, which they who felt it could scarcely comprehend, and dared not utter. But it spread, for the cause that was operating was increasing in strength. Similarity of feeling brought men together. They whispered to each other these high thoughts, and were astonished to find they were not alone. The rest need not be detailed. The thoughts which men had conceived in their own bosoms, alone and solitary, soon ripened into united and successful action. Emboldened by a common sentiment,—urged on by a common cause, men gathered into one great phalanx, strong, resolute, irresistible,—and guided by this same principle of free thought and inquiry, widely and more widely extended, they have marched onward, clearly and directly, to the present day. But though clear and direct, their course has not been uninterrupted. Another storm was yet to be encountered. What we have seen of man’s history,

as he advanced to the great reform of religion, is literally true of his progress to the reform of government. The natural tendency of the principles which he began to apply to the investigation of government, was to display to him in its true colors the enormous tyranny, which he had suffered under its name. He discovered, that he whom he had honored as his king, had been his master and oppressor; that prerogative was extortion,—that power was despotism. A determination to set himself free from the yoke was coeval with the discovery,—and his subsequent history is but a history of his efforts.

But were they met by no counter ones? Did the hereditary and as they thought the sacred depositaries of wisdom and power, stand cool spectators of the destruction which the principles then spreading were to bring upon their thrones? Did the legitimate, divinely commissioned rulers of mankind, part with their time-hallowed sceptres without a struggle? No. They followed the example of their great king, the Pope. They planted themselves upon their thrones, armed with every weapon which sovereignty, long submitted to, could furnish, and bade defiance to the power that would touch its foundation. The spirit of liberty that was abroad was in their eyes a monster, to the destruction of which every nerve was to be strained,—every power exerted. But were they to succeed? Was the great tide of improvement and freedom, which had been rolling on, as we have traced it, for centuries, and which had just rolled over and buried the palace of a Pope,—to be stopped at the throne of a king, the servant of a Pope? How little did these opposers of man comprehend the power against which they were struggling! How little did they understand the nature of man, or anticipate the consequences which, in a single century, would result from his efforts!

The power and energy of the human mind, however opposed, still advanced, and gained strength. Henry VIII., whose reign is connected with the Reformation, only as the light of the latter serves to make the darkness of the former more visible, had passed off the scene. The boy Edward VI.,—the weak, bigoted, tyrannical Mary,—the great and singular Elizabeth, who seems to have supported the absolute power of the throne against the growing strength of free principles, more

by the sort of infatuation which she inspired as a remarkable woman, than by her authority as a queen,—and last, that profound and erudite scholar, James I.,—these were the persons who, for the century succeeding the Reformation, had filled the throne, and upheld the degrading policy against which the efforts of man had, during the same period, been constantly and with increasing earnestness directed. The two great parties, though they had repeatedly clashed, had yet forborne an encounter. But it could be forborne no longer. A time of collected energy, like that of the Reformation, had again come round,—the great question was again to be tried. Charles I., whose education and disposition both led him to carry the ideas of sovereignty and prerogative to their farthest verge, was seated upon the throne; and in him, the opposers of freedom were to make their last great stand. Charles was the last bulwark of absolute power. True to his purpose, he resolved that, at all risks, it should succeed. But freedom, who had hitherto been struggling most manfully, though with doubtful fortune, was not left unfriended, in this hour of danger. Pym, Coke, Cromwell, Hampden, and other such men were numbered in her ranks,—and in them she found champions every way fit to meet the champions of her foes. Now was the hour, when another great battle was to be fought,—between the same parties and for the same cause, that we have traced through all history. The combatants were ready. They had borne with each other long enough,—the time had now come, when one or the other must fall. It was a dark and eventful hour; but it was the harbinger of a bright day for the human race. The combat was fierce and severe, but it was not long. The issue was the same as it always had been. Freedom was victorious. The collected vigor of centuries was too much for the oppressor,—he quailed before it, tottered, and fell. The empire of tyranny was thrown down, and in less than a quarter of a century from his ascending the throne, the champion of supremacy was headless upon a scaffold.

There is a startling interest connected with this last revolution, as it illustrates the immense impulse, which free principles had obtained. We trace this impulse in the victory itself,—but it strikes us most forcibly, as we see these principles overflowing their proper channels, as they subsequently did, and hurry-

ing men away almost to the very ruin they were avoiding. Not satisfied with having attained their point,—all on fire, as it were, from the heat of the late combat,—men could not be restrained. The radical Cromwell rose up, and taking advantage of the prevalent delusions, seated himself in the place, though he dared not assume the name, of a King. These were some of the extravagances, into which men were hurried. But they did not continue long. Having been saved from their enemies, they were next saved from themselves. The fury of this tempest of freedom soon subsided. The events which followed the revolution were calculated to allay it. We look upon the Restoration by no means as a return to the old order of things, as we have sometimes heard it called. The *form* of the Government was indeed restored,—and we believe, that as things then were, this was a useful step. It was a salutary as well as natural re-action from the then dangerous extremity to which men's minds had been carried. But the *spirit* of the government was essentially modified. The power of the crown received a check, which it feels to the present hour. Men were not ripe for the extremity, into which the flush of victory had hurried them, and we rejoice that they receded from it partially, and only partially, as they did. We mean not to say that perfection, or any thing like perfection, was the result of this revolution. If it had been, there would have been no occasion for our own. There were many evils left,—there are many still remaining,—and whether they are chargeable to Charles or to Cromwell,—to the Revolution, or the Restoration,—it is impossible now to say.

But whatever may be thought, at the present day, of the characters of these two conspicuous individuals,—we believe that the revolution, with which their names are associated, was a mighty event for man, the influence of which was not counteracted, but only modified in its excesses by the subsequent events. Charles was a royalist ; Cromwell a radical. Their doctrines were two extremes, and as men fled from one, they rushed into the other. But both were dangerous. Charles was a tyrant, it is true. But he was born a tyrant and educated a tyrant. He looked back upon the long line of his predecessors, and the lesson which they all taught him was, that the King was supreme. The stream of freedom

had, indeed, been flowing on,—but it was among the people alone. He who sat upon the throne was above its current. He felt not its influence;—and when the sound of its motion first fell upon his ear, he knew not what it was. The rising spirit of his people, so strange to a King, he may have mistaken, and honestly so, for a movement dangerous even to themselves, and felt bound therefore, as the hereditary guardian of their safety, to quell and subdue it. Pity, therefore, mingles largely with our indignation at the character of Charles. But still he was a tyrant. Whatever and how honest soever his motives, which may apologize in any measure for the man, —he was yet laboring to defeat the great progress of the human race, and we thank God that he failed. Nay more, if his life was inconsistent with the safety of man, if it was necessary, for the accomplishment of the great work, that history should contain so painful an example, it was well that he was beheaded.

But now that all danger from Charles was at an end, we rejoice that men did not long follow, where Cromwell would have led them. His principles, as we have said, were at the opposite extreme, from those which had perished with Charles upon the scaffold; and unsettled as were men's minds, these principles were perilous. The transition to them was too sudden,—it could not be and it was not lasting. We would not impeach the motives of Cromwell. We can believe that he was carried away, like the rest of men, by the enthusiasm of the times, and that the course he pursued was an honest, though mistaken one. We condemn not the character of Cromwell:—on the contrary, we would unite his name among the benefactors of man. For the firmness and independence, with which he maintained the cause of freedom, we thank him. For the courage and bravery, with which he wielded the sword in her defence, when the last great struggle came, we thank him. But we must stop here. As a leader and a ruler, we must again rejoice that his principles failed for a time, as did those of Charles forever. We must rejoice that his extreme was abandoned without a convulsion,—as we did that Charles's was with one. We believe that the true and only safe course for man, was between the two. And we believe that it was the tendency of the Restoration, and of

the events succeeding the Revolution, to lead him to that middle path.

Instead, therefore, of jarring and discordant influences among the characters and the changes of this momentous period, we perceive all unison and harmony. The brief survey we have taken of the men and the events, and of their operation upon each other, authorizes and demands of us, to hail the revolution of the seventeenth century, with its attendant circumstances, as another, and a brilliant triumph of the great cause of man. In our joy at the impulse which it imparted to mankind, we can overlook the shortlived excess, into which it hurried them. Its evil influence was soon remedied; the good has never ceased. We read it in every page of subsequent history, after the excitement of the various events had passed, in the better defined rights of ruler and people,—in the gradual rejection of the absurd notions of supremacy and obedience,—in the liberal and independent sentiments which have since marked the human mind,—in the constantly advancing freedom of thought, opinion and speech. These results, as they gradually developed themselves, bear witness of this event, that it belongs to the great series;—and above all, do they bear witness, that this revolution, combined with the rest which we have traced, inspired that energy of mind, and independence of feeling, which created and sent hither the heroes of our own.

The next great revolution was our own. The interval between this and that of the seventeenth century, was marked by no convulsion. The abdication of James II., and the accession of the houses of Orange and Brunswick, are events which fall within this period, and are of material importance. They shew the immense diminution of regal power, and the consequent increase of popular influence. By the circumstances attending them, we can trace the same great principles which have run, like a golden thread, through the whole texture of history. But the end had not come yet. The lesson of equal rights and privileges,—of what man owed to his fellow man, and of the only principles by which the elevation of the whole race could effectually be secured,—though all previous history had been teaching it, was not yet understood. The oppressors of man were not yet satisfied, that his cause was omnipotent,—and they resolved again to

give it battle. Severe, therefore, and frequent as had been the struggle of freedom,—another, the boldest and the best, was yet to come. As if in direct anticipation of the accomplishment of the great purpose, a new country had been discovered, uncontaminated by the footprints of despotism, whose atmosphere was pure and free. Disgusted with the oppressions of the old world,—hither came the champions of freedom; and secure in the sacredness of their purpose, they here made a stand, from which they vowed never to be moved. But the eternal foes of freedom, who had ever been upon her track, that they might strike her to the earth, still pursued her here. She had come out from among them, and here stood alone; they thought that she would fall an easy prey. But the scene had changed. Instead of lurking, like a criminal, in secret places, freedom had now a home,—a country of her own. Patriotism was on her side, and the impulse which that reflection gave her, carried her triumphantly through the struggle she encountered. Our Revolution was that struggle, and its result forever settled the question, which all time had been agitating, whether man should be free. It told him, that the time had at length come when government must be changed,—when he could govern himself. The foundation of monarchy, therefore, was completely thrown down, and republican institutions, the great bulwark of liberty, rose upon its ruins. We intend not to dwell upon this event. Its causes and result are too familiar to require even to be mentioned. We name it, however, as being the great point, to which all that we have said before has been tending. We name it, as being connected with and springing from all the other revolutions we have traced,—originating in a farther development of the same causes, and resulting in a wider extension of the same great principles. As we said, therefore, when we began, it stands not alone. The great view which should be taken of it is that which looks beyond the narrow bounds of its time and place,—pictures to the eye what went before and what shall come after, and embraces the whole as one entire, extended prospect. And when its history is studied, and its great features dwelt upon, we would have it remembered, as a point of unspeakable interest,—that it is not our history merely, but mankind's,—that its great arena

was not our country alone, but the world,—that we only were not its combatants, but the human race.

In thus tracing, as we have attempted, the progress of revolutions, and marking their uniform tendency towards our own, and with that, towards universal improvement, we have spoken of religious and political revolutions without distinction. We have treated the events which sent forward Christianity, in common with those which aided the cause of political liberty. We have done it, because we believe them the same in principle. We have done it, because we believe that there is an uniformity of design, between that religion and the institutions of civil freedom, which bespeaks the same Author of both. We know not a more glorious thought, and we believe it to be true,—one that should move, animate and inspire, while it awes and controls us,—than this:—that free principles of government, liberty of opinion and action upon our rights and duties, are but a part, a wider extension of that stupendous, yet beautiful plan, which originated in Judea on the birthday of our Saviour. We know not a more glorious thought, and we believe it to be true,—than that Christianity and republican institutions, as far as they are based upon the same foundation of universal liberty and personal responsibility, as far as the design of both is to elevate man by giving him his free course, are to walk hand in hand, through the earth, brethren of the same family, children of the same Father. Christianity, we know, was the elder and the stronger,—the nobler and more exalted brother,—and it was meet, therefore, that it should lead the van as it did in the march of reformation,—for that reformation began at a time, when its younger and weaker brother, political freedom, would have been overwhelmed and crushed. The battle to be fought was tremendous, and it was fit that something more than human should come forth to meet its brunt. And Christianity came forth to meet it. It came forth to battle with men's prejudices and passions, to dispel the mists, to scatter the rubbish, and to teach them,—what has proved their hardest lesson,—themselves. And when it had opened a way, and when all things were ready, it called to its younger brother to come out to its aid. And that brother has gone forth. The time, we say, has come, and these two pioneers of liberty have joined their hands,—friends,

compeers and fellow-laborers,—and they are going onward, each encouraging and supporting the other, and both enlightening and emancipating the world.

We may laugh at the story of the divine rights of kings, or the divine right of any other man, call himself what he may, to rule his fellow man. We may ridicule the idea, that any form of government, monarchical or republican, came from the hands or can claim the special sanction of the Ruler of the Universe. But there is one sense, in which we can believe in this divine origin of governments. It is when we contemplate them, as growing out of, supporting and being supported by the unshackled spirit of the people who live under them,—it is when we believe that the principles of our religion should be the principles of our government,—it is when we feel, that as individuals, as citizens and as Christians, we are the same, called to the same duties, blessed with the same privileges,—it is then, that we shall see the finger of the King of Kings, and learn that the charter of our religious and political liberties is one and the same hallowed scroll, and that it came from the hands of God.

There is much satisfaction to be gathered from the view we have taken of great events. It lights up and gives interest to the whole history of man,—that history which, without it, would, in many parts, be but dark and gloomy. It shows us the great stream of freedom and improvement, as it flowed ‘fast by the oracles of God.’ There was its great source and thence did it issue. It has been constantly flowing on through all time. Man has, indeed, endeavored to obstruct its course. Tyrants have labored to arrest its progress. But what have they effected? They have built up their barriers, lofty and strong, and thought that their purpose was accomplished. But though they had impeded for a moment, they had not arrested, the mighty current. The stream was flowing on, rising higher and higher,—gathering its forces against that which opposed it, till at length it reached the top. It could be stayed no longer. Furiously and in an instant, it dashed over its bounds. The barrier and its builder were swept away to destruction, and after a moment, you might have looked in vain for a vestige of the work. But again the stream rolled on, faster and freer, from the very resistance it had met,—till another barrier was erected, and, in like manner,

swept away. This has been the course of the great stream. Like this has been the history of man. The silent gatherings of the waters are the seeming dark places. The loud rushes of their overflow are the great revolutions. The view we have taken, then, does light up history. It shows us, that its seeming dark parts, were but the preparation for the bright,—and that all, though not equally prominent, were the same in their purpose. It shows us, too, that the very opposition of tyrants has been made to give an impulse to freedom,—that man has never been deserted,—that his course has ever been onward.

The view we have taken of revolutions, as connected with our own, furnishes matter of useful, as well as pleasing reflection. We can invite the present generation, whose countenances are lit up by the fair light of freedom, to stand upon the eminence which Providence has assigned them, and to look back upon the history of their race. They will find in all other men fellow-laborers and brethren, partners in a common struggle, pressing forward to a common end. They will learn from the scene, to repress the vain thought, which would impute to their own Revolution alone, the liberty they enjoy. They will learn their indebtedness to past generations. The fathers of our Revolution were indeed, noble men,—generous, high souled men. Never forgotten, ever honored be their names. But they stand not alone, the sole pillars of freedom. They were but the associates of the great leaders of other revolutions. They took up the work, where these had left it, and to these, therefore, with them, is the honor due.

And they, too, who are apprehensive, that man's cause may yet be lost,—that he may yet fall from the height, which he has reached,—may gather cheering confidence from the scene which has been displayed. They will discover that freedom is not the mere bubble of a moment, blown up to deceive, and then to burst and disappear. They will learn, that it is the grand result of all things,—that as it has been striving for ages, it shall endure for ages, permanent and everlasting. We would bid those, then, who are trembling for the fate of liberty, to look upon the history of their race and be encouraged. Shall the glorious sun, which has so long been surmounting the clouds that obscured his rising, and which has just broken forth in brilliancy, above them,—shall it go

down again, whence it rose,—its course unfinished,—the world in darkness? Shall it not rather ride upward to its meridian, in a bright and unclouded path, illumine the universe, and if it descend at all, sink placidly in the west, only when time shall cease? We believe it will be thus. It is the voice of history.

We have left ourselves no room to speak of the revolutions, that have succeeded our own; and we need none. They have been too clearly the manifestations of the same principles which we have traced through history, too intimately connected with our own Revolution, to require extended comment. They tell the same story, which we have learned from their predecessors, that there is a power in man, which will struggle on till it completes its work; a power, which, though sometimes rash and misguided, is yet strong, in the end, for good. They are parts, therefore, of the same series we have been considering. In this view, they should be considered. In this view, their temporary evils can be overlooked. We can hail their principles, as the same for which past generations and even ourselves have labored, and therein can argue for them eventual success. We would, that these principles might triumph without convulsions, that reason might supersede the sword. But this may not be at present. Other revolutions must be met and passed through. We can but pray that the leaders of them may be just, true, patriotic, and disinterested,—not, however, because we believe that the result is in their hands. There is a higher power, which has watched over, and will continue to watch over that result. But the leaders may do much to shorten or prolong the struggle. We pray, therefore, that they may be patriots indeed,—and that the time may soon come, when in the history of mankind shall be read the perfect triumph of freedom, religion and right.
